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CONTENTS

OUR LAVENDER

- 8 From the Editor
- 10 A Word in Edgewise
- 12 Lavender Lens

OUR SCENE

- 16 Bar Showcase
- 18 Arts Interview: For a Good Time Call...
- 24 Movie Night Dinner Party
- 30 Fall Arts & Food Pairings
- 54 Travel: Alabama's Gulf Shore

OUR AFFAIRS

- 56 Books
- 57 Big Gay News
- 58 Against the Amendment

OUR RESOURCES

- 59 The Network
- 62 Community Connection
- 65 Classifieds

OUR VOICES

- 61 Dateland
- 64 Ms. Behavior
- 64 Trolin
- 66 Through These Eyes

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18



24

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Photo by Joan Marcus



30



54

Photo by Carla Waldemar

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Prizes



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I DON'T usually go to the State Fair alone. I can find something entertaining anywhere I go, but I enjoy things differently when I'm with people. Especially true at the Fair, I like to sample and taste and judge my way through with friends or family. I experience it differently based on whom I'm with; the niece and nephew like the Midway, my dad likes Machinery Hill, my foodie friends dissect the new cuisine.

This year, I went solo. On the schedule for the day, I knew I'd meet up with folks at Carnes and Liggett for the Sixth Annual Gay Day at the State Fair...and I planned to run into other friends later. But, for the first few hours, I ambled around on my own terms. Looking, observing, SWEATING. Goodness, that was a hot day with a relentless sun. I know—it was a summer Sunday. A perfect one, really.

As I wandered, I thought about all the people who were there for the unofficial Gay Day at the Fair. The dress code was hopeful—people were directed to get Vote NO shirts from Minnesotans United for All Families. Great idea. I scanned the crowds and saw one here and there. Wander, wander, wander—there's one. Wander. Wander. Okay...there weren't many. I was disheartened. There I was, taking a survey of a cross-section of our state. People as far as the eye could see and nary a Vote NO shirt on one of them. Was I looking at a representative sample of our state? God, I hope not.

With crumbs and cream of Ole's Cannolis still on my lips, I checked the State Fair App for where the Minnesotans United for All Families stand was located so I could go get my own Vote NO shirt. Searching in "Merchandise," I found out the stand was on Cooper, over by Dan Patch. These names make sense when looking at a State Fair map...or when being a really good pointer, as I found out.

Making my way to the little orange Vote NO booth was easier planned than done. Turns out, it had the longest line that I would stand in at the entire Fair. What a great problem to have! Here were my people! They were walking away with t-shirts and fans and buttons and stickers. When it was my turn to get my goods, I confirmed that what I'd heard was true—they didn't have a t-shirt in my size. (I've told you before how I'm a large Nordic woman; it makes sense that I shop for dress shoes with the drag queens and could probably tussle over t-shirts with the bears.) I'm hopeful that they'll order some larger shirts for the larger people—there are still two months left for us to wear them (and we make for more impressive walking billboards...I'm just saying). So, I dejectedly left with a Vote NO fan and went on my merry way.

Because of my Vote NO fan, I wasn't really alone the rest of my time at the Fair. In the blazing sun, that fan was used and abused. No fewer than ten times, I was stopped and asked where I got the it. Each time, the person asking surprised me. An older woman, a younger couple, a punky kid who didn't look like he should care. I got schooled just by letting myself notice who was noticing the Vote NO fans. I did a lot of pointing, a bit of showing on the map, and a whole lot of hand gesturing to show where Cooper is in relation to other landmarks.

As I was walking to the parking lot where I'd abandoned my Jeep



earlier in the day, I was stopped one last time. This time, it wasn't just surprise that halted me—I had to actually stop and understand what was going on. A woman in a scooter was signing to me. It took me a beat or two to realize it, but once I started watching her motions and reading her lips, it was clear that she was asking me where I got my Vote NO fan, though I don't really know American Sign Language. I paused and tried to mouth the word clearly as I pointed yet again in the direction of "Cooper." From her expression, it didn't look like I'd conveyed it clearly. I tried again, "COOOOPER." Not louder, just more pronounced. Nope. Then it dawned on me. I sign-spelled "C-O-O-P-E-R." She smiled and nodded. I don't know how I remembered the alphabet that I learned in elementary school, but we did it. We had a conversation about Voting NO in a matter of a minute of time on a sweaty afternoon in August.

She signed "thank you." I returned the gesture, and we both went on our ways, smiling.

Looking around as she went the direction of the Vote NO booth and I went the direction of my Jeep, I felt a new sense of hope for November. Though I still couldn't see many Vote NO t-shirts in the crowd, I know knew that there were plenty of people feeling that sentiment...plenty of people wanting to show their signs of support for Voting NO.

And I remain hopeful.

With thanks,

Andy □

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Separation of Church and Hate: Continuing Conversations

ONE CAN'T help but notice that most objections to legalizing same-sex marriage are religion-based. An opponent simply parrots, "It says in Leviticus" or, "It says in..." wherever the objector has seized upon his or her opinion.

There's no point in listing here all the things that have been cherry-picked from the Bible and used over and over again against gays (lesbians, not so much) by the so-called religious right. However valid, however well thought out one's own arguments may be, they will not be considered. Anti-gays will continue to twist words to suit their bias, not caring that Chick-fil-A's bacon and sausage breakfasts are doubly *treif* for Jewish Old Testament kosher-keepers and Christians insistent on the Bible's inerrancy alike.

So don't waste your words. It's but a moment until November 6, and there are plenty of religious folks in various faiths who know, work with or are related to, gays. They are willing to listen, to question, to discuss and want their gay neighbors to have the civil rights due all Minnesota's citizens. Open conversations with those who may have concerns but who believe that gay people have the same legal rights to marriage, home and family protections as they currently enjoy.

The most important thing to discuss is the need for the separation of church and state that was the goal of the our nation's founding fathers. Make it clear that future laws allowing same-sex marriages in

no way means that a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious group will be forced to perform a same sex wedding if its leaders do not choose to do so.

More and more churches are willing to perform same sex marriages if that is what a couple wants, but, just as in a heterosexual marriage, it is not the religious ceremony that legalizes the bond but the state's certificate. Without registering a marriage with the state, *no* couple is legally married. Many heterosexual couples totally forgo a religious wedding.

Today many people of faith are realizing that denying other citizens their rights on religions grounds is not only unfair and wrong, but is a situation where religion subsumes the state. They are open to discuss gay marriage, to listen, to seek solutions. These are the people who we should engage in conversations, to open ourselves and share our lives: show that gays harbor no hidden "agendas" other than every citizen's open "agenda" for the right to be able to marry the partner (*One. Human.*) of our choice and a chance to live life to the full, enjoying the myriad federal and state protections that our heterosexual neighbors do.

Speak out to friends who have questions, urge other gays and lesbians to engage in conversations at work, at home. Our voices need to be raised to make a difference. Consider what will happen if we don't.

Vote NO in November. ☐

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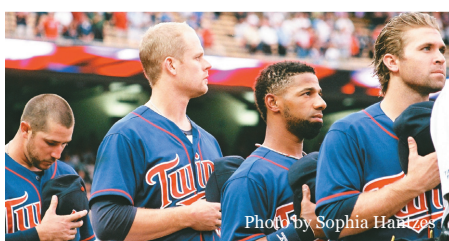


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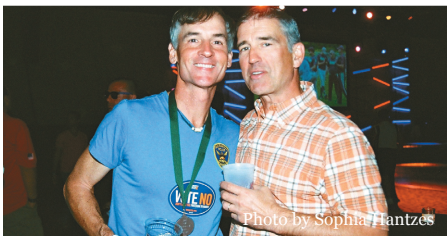


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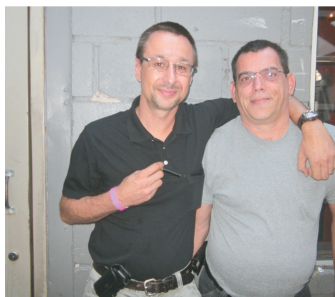
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6TH ANNUAL GAY DAY AT STATE FAIR

AUGUST 26



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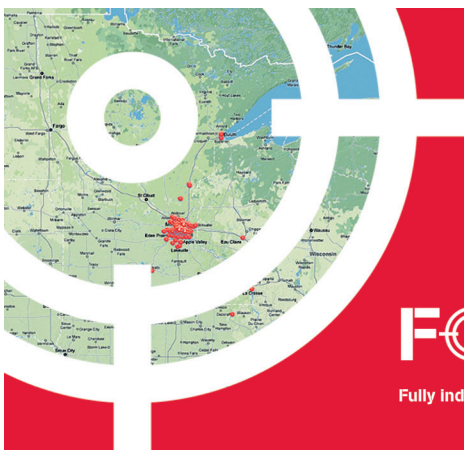
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A SEXY CONVERSATION WITH THE FOLKS FROM FOR A GOOD TIME, CALL...

Gay film director Jamie Travis's marvelous new comedy, *For A Good Time, Call...*, rejects the idea that sex is bad. When two women set up a phone sex business you may think that they will magnetize only the scum of the earth. But the writers, actors, and director puncture that seedy stereotype and take a deeper and much funnier view of sex and intimacy. I got to chat with Travis, co-writer and lead actress Lauren Anne Miller (whose husband Seth Rogen also appears in the film), co-writer Katie Anne Naylor, and the other terrific lead actress, Ari Graynor.

John: I love this film's overt sexuality and sweet personality. So many kinds of sexual expression and things like phone sex, kink, fetishes, etc. are systematically stigmatized in our culture. Even now, all these years af-

ter the Sexual Revolution. I loved how you all show that sexuality is wonderful and can be fun and a legitimate way to connect with others. But sex so often gets a bad rap.

Lauren: One of the things that makes

me crazy is that you can get a PG-13 rating for a movie where someone shoots someone else in the head, or they blow up their house, or they set them on fire, or something awful. As long as there's not too much blood you can get a PG-13.

So, God forbid, you talk about sex, which is something that all human beings, in theory, do at some point-if you're lucky-and suddenly that gets an R rating. You can't talk about something that everyone does. But if you showcase something that someone should never do, like shooting someone in the head, that's allowed.

Ari: All of the movies about the end of the world, the apocalypse. People preying on people's worst fears. Where people die in films or get killed in films, where it's so plentiful that no one even talks about it anymore.

Jamie: Our film is kind've the opposite of the horror film paradigm when the first girl who has sex is punished by being murdered and it's always the virgin that survives this mass murder. We're kind of the opposite in that we're a celebration of sex and the more the Katie and Lauren characters embrace sexuality, whether it's on the phone or real life, they become more complete versions of themselves.

John: As I was watching the film I thought about how lonely people are and that too often you can't reach out for sex with any ease in this society unless, say, you are a gay or bi man and you go to a cruising area, which can be fraught with problems. Or for whatever your orientation is, singles bars and other places to meet others, are fraught with their particular problems and obstacles as well. It shows the poignancy of how we can't really talk about sexual needs and desires. We're conditioned to miscommunicate about sexual desires and needs. There's also this tendency to stigmatize sex automatically as shallow. But it can also be a corridor to

Continued on page 20



(left to right.) Actress Ari Graynor, director Jamie Travis and actress - co-writer Lauren Miller on the set of *For A Good Time, Call...* Photo by Jim Sheldon-Focus Features

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Katie: I think you're right to bring up intimacy because I think that's what comes up through the Katie and Sean characters. I've shown you my short film. Well you got through my essay I wrote. And they start to reveal themselves to each other and tell each other things. Its not meant that they make out when the camera is off. It means they share themselves with each other. Intimacy and sex are very closely related and I think people probably see sex in it when it's really about intimacy. And having been a phone sex operator in real life, this is a bit of a cliché, but alot of people do call to talk and just want to talk and just have a human connection in an anonymous way. And maybe they don't have anyone to talk to. But I think intimacy really hits it on the head.

John: It's so important for people to feel like they can be in a space where they are not judged. One needs to feel that its safe and good to be vulnerable when in a space of intimacy and sex. So much can and does come up from the subconscious.

Ari: I picked up a the other day a book about Freud's three theories of sexuality and I've only gotten through one so far. But essentially, what he says is that it's completely normal for everyone to have some kind of fetish, these ideas of whatever a fetish can mean, as long as it doesn't become an obsession. It's (a fetish) completely within the realm of human sexual exploration and people are incredibly judgemental about sex in every way I think. And I do think it's fun to poke a little fun at that and open it up – that it doesn't have to be such a 'to do'.


Lauren: The term I learned was 'polymorphously perverse' – the thing that you would find abnormal is often the thing that turns you on. And I think that for so many people that's their sexual thing. And to bring that out in the open and make fun of it and bring it out there, like that's really cool to do. And I'm glad we did that and get a laugh out of it.

John: Yes. But it wasn't like you are ridiculing it. You found the natural humor in something that's intrinsic to our human sexual nature. □

For A Good Time, Call...
now screening at area movie theaters



(From top) Nia Vardalos as Rachel Rodman; Justin Long as Jesse; Ari Graynor as Katie, Justin Long as Jesse and Lauren Miller as Lauren in Jamie Travis' *For A Good Time, Call...* Photos courtesy of Focus Features



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Details and reservations at mnzoo.org

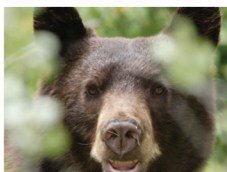


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Ross Sveback

A Night IN at the Movies

WHEN ANDY approached me regarding this feature it instantly brought movies to mind that featured iconic foods we all seem to remember. Deciding on the dishes was the easy part, now came the recipe creation. I remember asking myself “Where am I going to find fava beans?” and “How do I incorporate SPAM into meatloaf?” Well, it took several tries yet I have to admit the results turned out surprisingly well.

Two of the recipes made my head churn more than the other though. For the fava beans with Chianti from *The Silence of the Lambs*, I had to consider that Hannibal Lecter was a food snob, so the dish needed to be upscale. I also wanted this recipe to double as a main course or side dish. The other, and probably most challenging dish, was the infamous meatloaf Annie Wilkes made for Paul in *Misery*. Again, I needed to consider the life this person really lived, her means, the availability of ingredients, as well as her quirky personality. Annie definitely considered herself a good cook, yet she lived in a remote Colorado mountain town; the basics with an odd twist was what I had to configure.

The remaining recipes are dishes I have made many times and are regulars at my table, but also happen to be a chocolate pie from *The Help* and fried green tomatoes from *Fried Green Tomatoes*. I did add one dish that does not come from any actual movie, yet is derived from a movie staple: hot buttered popcorn. My mom used to make a popcorn cake when I was young, only she would fill it with spiced gumdrops, which I hated. My sister recently turned me on to Hot Buttered Popcorn Jelly Belly Jelly Beans, so I combined the two and decided to “frost” the cake with melted white chocolate.

I hope these recipes inspire you as they did me. Please turn your cell phones off

now, the show is about to begin...

Fried Green Tomatoes

“Face it ladies, I’m older and I have insurance.” This iconic side dish from the South eventually became the title of an iconic movie, *Fried Green Tomatoes*. To me, you need to think about fried green tomatoes like you

do potatoes, plenty of seasoning. This dish would be a great thing to snack on while you watch this movie since they do stay hot for a good half an hour. I like to fry these in my grandmother’s electric skillet as it does a great job regulating the heat of the peanut oil. I figure one tomato for 1-2 people, depending on the hunger level. ➔



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mixture one by one. Place gently into hot oil, making sure not to add more than six slices at a time since it will drop the oil temperature. Fry for 2 minutes first side/1 1/2 minutes on the second side. Place onto a paper-towel lined tray or dish and season generously with salt and pepper. They remain hot for a long time, so do not worry about serving immediately. Enjoy!

Fava Beans with Chianti

"A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti." There was no way I could not include this famous dish referenced in *The Silence of the Lambs*. I wanted to create a dish that could either be eaten on its own or enjoyed as a side dish. I honestly think this would also be fantastic served on crostini. The fava beans are surprisingly easy to find at your local supermarket in the dried beans section; these are from Bob's Red Mill. To reconstitute them I placed them in my pressure cooker with 5 c. water, 1 tbsp. oil, 1 tsp. sea salt, 1 sprig of fresh rosemary, and 4 sprigs of fresh thyme. I cooked them for ten minutes and was gentle to try and not break them up too much—they are quite fragile in this state, so I did not add them until the very end of making the dish. Obviously if you can find fresh fava beans, that would be preferred.

Heat electric skillet to 375 degrees filled with roughly 1/2c of peanut oil. Slice and remove the green tomatoes' tops and bottoms, then quarter middle sections into four evenish slices. Most green tomatoes are roughly 3 around. Place on a sheet pan that has been lined with paper towels and generously season with salt, pepper and sugar.

While oil is heating and tomatoes are sitting, mix together:

Bowl 1-
1 1/2 c. buttermilk
3 eggs
1/2 tsp. salt

Bowl 2-
1 c. flour
1 c. cornmeal (I prefer Bob's Red Mill)
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper

Using one hand (keeping the second hand clean), dip tomato slice into buttermilk mixture and then dredge into flour/cornmeal

To a medium sauté pan I added:

1 tbsp. olive oil
1 red onion, halved and medium sliced
1 package sliced baby bella mushroom
leaves from 1 sprig of fresh rosemary
leaves from 4 sprigs of fresh thyme
4 c. fresh fava beans (OR read the recipe above for preparing dried)

I sautéed this until the mushrooms had released most of their moisture and the onions softened. Then I removed the dish from the stove and added:

1 tsp. sea salt
zest of 1 lemon
cooked fava beans

I gently stirred the mixture to combine, trying not to break the beans up too much. I topped each portion with fresh Parmesan cheese that I cut using a vegetable peeler. This is made easier if you pull the Parmesan out when you begin making the dish.

Of course I served it with Gionelli Chianti with its iconic raffia-wrapped bottom.

Annie's Spam Meatloaf from Misery



"My secret is, I always use fresh tomatoes, never canned. And to give it that extra zip, I mix a little Spam with the ground beef!" I'm certain Annie Wilkes loved to cook and felt she was definitely gourmet. When creating this recipe I wanted to actually consider what Annie Wilkes would have on hand in her home and use to create her special meatloaf for Paul. Of course she had to drive into town for fresh tomatoes...

Meatloaf:

2.5 lbs. 80% lean ground beef
1 - 12 oz. container SPAM, grated
3 eggs
1 c. quick-cooking oats
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. dried basil
1 tsp. dried parsley
1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper

Fresh Tomato Sauce:

4 large tomatoes, deseeded, pulp removed and chopped
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. dried basil
1 tsp. dried parsley
1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper

To make the sauce, place all of the ingredients into a large fry or sauté pan over medium-low heat, simmering/cooking until tomatoes release most of their moisture, stirring occasionally. This process takes roughly 20 minutes. Set aside.

For meatloaf, combine the eggs,





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oatmeal, garlic powder, basil, parsley, and crushed red pepper together, stirring with a fork. Set aside so oatmeal can absorb moisture.

Grate SPAM using the large holes of a box grater and mix gently together with ground beef. Add in oatmeal mixture and combine. Form into a loaf shape and place into a 1 lb. loaf pan. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 45 minutes. Remove from oven and carefully place fresh tomato sauce on top, gently pressing it on top to adhere. Place back into oven and bake for 20 more minutes then remove from oven and allow to rest for 15 minutes before serving.

The Help Dark Chocolate Cream Pie

"No! No. No. No, Miss Walters. That's Miss Hilly's special pie." If you've seen *The Help*,

you know what makes the pie so special. But, we'll leave that ingredient in the movie. Intense and dark, this chocolate cream pie is sure to satisfy even the most devout chocolate around. This deep flavor is created by using unsweetened cocoa powder and bittersweet chocolate. To keep the whipped cream stable I incorporate half a package of unflavored gelatin in with the mixture, adding the gelatin to half of the heavy whipping cream, heating it up in the microwave in a liquid measuring cup to activate the gelatin, then letting it cool to room temperature and finally adding it to the remaining cold cream and whipping it in a chilled bowl.

Crust:

1 1/2 c. flour
2 tbsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
8 tbsp. cold, unsalted butter – diced
2 tbsp. water

In a food processor, pulse together flour, sugar, and salt until combined – then add diced butter and pulse until butter is in small, pea-sized pieces. Drizzle water over mixture

and then pulse until mixture holds together. Form into a ball and place on a silpat, flatten into a round disc, and then place a second silpat on top. Using a french rolling pin, roll into a 12" circle and place into a 9" pie pan trimming edge and finishing/crimping to your desire. Use a fork to prick holes in bottom and place in refrigerator to chill while you make filling.

After chilling for 15-20 minutes, line the dough in the pie dish with foil and fill with dried beans (this is called blind baking) and bake in a 350 degree-preheated oven for 20 minutes, then remove foil and beans and place back into the oven for another 15-20 minutes until crust begins to lightly color.

Filling:

3 c. half & half
2/3 c. sugar
3 tbsp. cornstarch
1/4 tsp. salt
4 large egg yolks
1/2 c. cocoa powder
8 oz. bittersweet chocolate
2 tbsp. unsalted butter
2 tsp. vanilla

Topping:

2 c. heavy cream

Continued on page 35 ➔

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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }

Lavender presents the Fall Arts & Food Issue Pairings! 50 of the hottest shows to hit stages this season are paired with 50 of the most apropos places to dine. Your theatre experience should match your culinary experience and, with the Twin Cities as your playground, we give you a list that's as entertaining and tasty as the shows and restaurants on it. The pairings are listed chronologically, but be sure to check the details for each show provided on the theatre websites—dates are subject to change.

BY JOHN TOWNSEND, JOY SUMMERS, AND CARLA WALDEMAR



Xanadu. Photo by Mike Hnida

XANADU

through September 29, 2012

The words “thought-provoking” don’t apply. This musical spoof of the ’80s cult film is pure cotton candy—a tasty riff on a California lad’s dream of—no, not simply movie stardom, but opening a roller disco. He gets a little help from the movie’s Olivia Newton John lookalike, a blonde Greek goddess (natch). Plus, Chan’s terrific song-and-danceters get to strut their stuff on wheels.

Venue: Chanhassen Dinner Theatres

—C.W.

Restaurant Pairing:

With a show that’s so deliciously fluffy, why even bother with the entrée? Head straight to the Chanhassen Dinner Theater’s Limoncello Cake, light cake soaked in lemon liqueur, it’s just as sweet and decadent as this poppy little love story on skates. 501 West 78th Street, Chanhassen www.chanhassentheatres.com

—J.S.

WAITING FOR GODOT

through September 30, 2012

The *Gone With the Wind* of absurdist drama or comedy, whichever you prefer. At the Jungle, with Nathan Keepers and Jim Lichtscheidl in the main roles, you can expect it to definitely go in the comic direction. Playwright Samuel Beckett is considered to be one of the greatest playwrights ever.

Venue: The Jungle Theater

—J.T.

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—J.S.



Waiting for Godot. Photos by Dan Norman

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—J.T.

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—J.S.



The Rainbow Election: Mommies and Mormons and Gays, Oh My!

Photo by Dani Werner



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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }



Buccaneers. Photo by Joan Buccina, Buccina Studios, Bradley Greenwald, Megan Fischer

THE BROTHERS SIZE

September 7, 2012

Pillsbury House Theatre and The Mount Curve Company

The second in Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brother/Sister Plays Trilogy* is staged by Pillsbury House and the Mt. Curve Company at Guthrie's Dowling Studio. Themes of prison, homosexuality, and race permeate this three man drama set in small-town Louisiana, with inspiration from Yoruban mythology. Directed by Marion McClinton.

Venue: Guthrie Theater's Dowling Studio

–J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Before heading to the Bayou, duck in to Dixie's in St. Paul for a bowl of their zesty gumbo and an order of their "soul fries." Not sure what makes them "soul," but french fries with blue cheese, scallions, and bacon are hard to resist. 695 Grand Ave, St. Paul www.dixiesongrand.com –J.S.

BUCCANEERS

September 11, 2012

A young girl rejects living with unlikable relatives, so she sails the ocean blue. But as fortune would have it, she falls into the clutches of pirates. Choreographer Joe Chvala says this world premiere will be 'edgy' with a score influenced by sea shanties and the ship's diverse ship crew.

Venue: Children's Theatre Company

–J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

There is no better pirate-themed restaurant than Smalley's Caribbean BBQ. Their food is killer with spice levels ranging from tame to nuclear. Be sure to get a side of their mac 'n' cheese with smokey peppers and bacon - it's one of the best arrrrrrhound. 423 Main Street South, Stillwater www.smalleyspiratebbq.com –J.S.

RED

September 14, 2012

Mark Rothko looms as one of modern art's paragons, but what happens when a hungry younger generation starts to make itself felt? The setting is the late 1950s, not in a museum, but at the Four Seasons Restaurant in the Seagram Building on Park Avenue where Rothko is on commission.

Venue: Park Square Theatre

–J.T.



Oceanaire. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

Restaurant Pairing:

Oceanaire went from past to present when they moved from the date Hyatt into their new digs in the heart of downtown. Interior décor also mixes eras, but that fantastic seafood remains the same. Get anything enhanced with "Dynamite." 50 S 6th St, Mpls www.theoceanaire.com –J.S.

TALES FROM HOLLYWOOD

September 15, 2012

Christopher Hampton's 1983 drama explores the world of artists who left Nazi Germany and moved to Hollywood. Intellectual/artistic titans like Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Mann are incongruously fascinating additions to Tinseltown where, let's face it, profit was (and still is) the bottom line. Cameos by Garbo, Tarzan, and Groucho.

Venue: Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage

–J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Enjoy a warm, fall evening on one of the best patios in town at the Black Forest Inn. Sample a few German dishes like Sauerbraten or their awesome potato salad alongside a cold beer. 1 East 26th Street, Mpls www.blackforestinnmpls.com –J.S.

LES PETITES CHOSES

September 21, 2012

ARENA DANCE

Choreographer Matthew Janczewski is known for his athletic and sensual dance performances. His Arena Dance troupe is what you could call 'hip!' You can expect testosterone-driven images and cutting edge music. You can also expect that the paradoxically intimate but spacious Cowles Center stage will enhance the primal power.

Venue: The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

–J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Prepare yourself for this sensual evening with a taste of France by way of Vincent – A Restaurant. Chef and owner Vincent Francoual and staff create elegant meals with sophisticated comfort food flavors with a stunner of a wine list. 1100 Nicollet Mall, Mpls www.vincentarestaurant.com –J.S.



Children's Theatre Company: www.childrenstheatre.org Guthrie Theater: www.guthrietheater.org



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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }

NABUCCO

September 22, 2012
Minnesota Opera

Discover why critics call this "the most satisfying of the early Verdi operas." Come prepared to suspend your disbelief in the story of Nabucco (the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar), who captures Jerusalem, enslaves its Jews, and—aha!—goes mad (Jehovah's revenge is sweet) and, from prison, sees one daughter about to execute her sister and grab the throne. But! Sanity returns, amid glorious music like the tear-jerking "Va pensiero" chorus, and all is—well, wonderful opera. Stars fave diva Brenda Harris.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
—C.W.

Restaurant Pairing:

A story about strife, hardship, and an intense love could very well be written about Stewart and Heidi Woodman. They've literally made it through fire and threaded through their every venture is their devotion to each other and their vision. Heidi's in Uptown is sleek, elegant and serves a gorgeous lamb shank. 2903 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls www.heidismpls.com
—J.S.

IVEY AWARDS

September 24, 2012

The glory night for Twin Cities Theater will award performances, designs, productions, and theater companies that have created exceptional work over the past year. The most eagerly awaited award is generally the final one for Lifetime Achievement. It's an elegant night where you may want to dress up and hobnob.

Venue: State Theatre
—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Toast the Ivey Awards at the restaurant that keeps racking up the local and national awards: The Bachelor Farmer. Plus – they've got toast!

The expertly crafted cocktails from Pip Hanson and crew will put you in the celebratory spirit. 50 North 2nd Street, Mpls www.thebachelorfarmer.com
—J.S.



Nabucco. Photo by ©Scott Suchman for Washington National Opera

THE CAT IN THE HAT

September 25, 2012

For 60 years he's been a favorite of mischievous kids everywhere! That cat in the tall, red-and-white striped hat with the big bow tie makes his American premiere. That's because the original production was produced by the National Theatre of Great Britain. In other words, that means 'the gold standard.'

Venue: Children's Theatre Company
—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Take young guests to a fancy dinner at the Oak Grill on Macy's 12th floor for popovers and pot pie. Before leaving for the show, run through the basement or the yearly holiday show that ends in all kinds of sugary treats. 700 Nicollet Mall, Mpls www.macys.com
—J.S.

I PURITANI

September 28, 2012

Minnesota Concert Opera

Vincenzo Bellini's 1835 Italian opera actually takes place in England during its Civil War of the 1640s, also known as the Puritan Revolution. Set in a castle, it shows what happens when battles thwart a marriage. Though the Puritans

were eventually defeated, their dreadful cultural influence still haunts us today.

Venue: The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts
—J.T.

before heading over. The gluttonous good food will vanquish any puritaniacal food feelings before this show. 302 13th Ave NE, Mpls www.theanchorfishandchips.com/
—J.S.



Anchor Fish and Chips. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

Restaurant Pairing:

Dine on the best fish n' chips in the cities at Anchor Fish and Chips

APPOMATTOX

September 29, 2012

The Court House in Appomattox, Virginia, was where Union General Ulysses S. Grant and Confederate General Robert E. Lee signed the treaty to end the American Civil War after the Southerner's surrender. Christopher Hampton's new play considers the profound problem of how a nation heals after a bloody prolonged conflict.

Venue: Guthrie Theater's McGuire Proscenium Stage
—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

In the spirit of fellowship, gather at Republic at Seven Corners for a couple of pints of local, craft beer and a bit of tasty pub grub. 221 Cedar Ave S, Mpls www.republicmn.com
—J.S.

I Puritani. Photo courtesy of MN Concert Opera



Hennepin Theatre Trust: www.hennepintheatretrust.org • History Theatre: www.historytheatre.com • Ivey Awards: www.iveyawards.com

44 LAVENDER | SEPTEMBER 6-19, 2012



Continued from page 28

1 tbsp. vanilla-bean paste
1/2 package unflavored gelatin (if desired)
In a large saucepan, place half & half, salt, cornstarch and eggs over medium heat and using a whisk, stir continually so the mixture does not burn, brining to a boil to thicken. Once it begins to bubble, add chocolate and stir again with whisk to melt chocolate. Once chocolate has melted, remove from heat and add butter and vanilla to combine. Pour into pre-baked and cooled pie shell. Cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator to chill, at least four (4) hours.

Hot Buttered Popcorn Cake

This is a nice iconic movie food, re-mixed in a way to impress anyone... with a little twist of popcorn-flavored jelly beans and white chocolate to top it off. On a side note, I mix all of this in one of those large pebbled-outside punch bowls from Party City – make the job easier to have a sufficient-sized bowl.

2 bags ACT II Extreme Butter Microwave Popcorn, popped
1 16 oz. container Hot Buttered Popcorn Jelly Belly Jelly Beans
1 16 oz. bag marshmallows
1 stick unsalted butter
1 tsp. vanilla bean paste
2 tsp. sea salt
1 lb. white chocolate

Prep a tube pan; I used a coffee cake pan and sprayed it liberally with cooking spray to ensure easy release. Place the popped popcorn and Jelly Bellies into a large bowl, no need to stir as the Jelly Bellies sink to the bottom. Melt marshmallows and butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat until marshmallows are almost melted. Remove from heat and stir until marshmallows have completely melted, then add vanilla bean paste. Pour over popcorn mixture and stir to combine. Last, sprinkle with sea salt and stir again to incorporate. Place into prepped tube pan and press down firmly to compact the cake. Allow to rest for two hours, then invert onto plate.

Melt white chocolate in a double boiler and when fully melted, remove from stove and, using a spatula, drizzle and spread white chocolate over top of cake. Allow to sit until chocolate has cooled and set onto cake. Serve. □

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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }

NEXT TO NORMAL

October 4, 2012

The first local production of what the Pulitzer Prize Board called "a powerful rock musical that grapples with mental illness in a suburban family and expands the scope of subject matter for musicals." Tony-winner Tom Kitt's evocative rock score was inspired by the likes of Billy Joel and U2.

Venue: Mixed Blood Theatre
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Go full-on rock for the night with a meal at Triple Rock Social Club. The food is killer bar food. Check out the "cheapo burger and a pint happy hour" or indulge in the Chef's Revenge. Don't worry, you'll like it. 629 Cedar Ave, Mpls www.triplerock-socialclub.com
-J.S.

BYE BYE BIRDIE

October 5, 2012

It's back to the '60s as Chanhassen reinvents the Tony-winning musical spoof of an Elvis-like rock'n'roller, Conrad Birdie, in his final moment of freedom before the Army nabs him. His publicists promise his goodbye kiss will go to winner of a national contest—a homespun, small-town cupcake (did you doubt it?), to be smooched on the Ed Sullivan "shew," as the iconic MC would say.

Venue: Chanhassen Dinner Theatres
-C.W.



Beauty and the Beast. Photo by Joan Marcus

Restaurant Pairing:

The girl is from Sweet Apple, Ohio, so why not nibble on another sweet tart confection like the Chanhassen Dinner Theater's Apple Bavarian Tart? That's after you say a little bye-bye, birdie to a couple of munchable chicken fingers. 501 West 78th Street, Chanhassen www.chanhassentheaters.com
-J.S.

LOMBARDI

October 6, 2012

We're so bombarded with sports anymore that it's easy to stop making distinctions about just who merits our attention v. who does not. But there can be no doubt that Green Bay's most legendary coach, Vince Lombardi, is one of the sports world's unquestionable titans. Jim Detmar stars.

Venue: History Theatre
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

All I need to hear is Green Bay and I'm craving some cheese. A place named Elsie's has to have a soft spot for the dairy products and the show it with a great plate of cheese curds, made with fresh Wisconsin cheese. 729 Marshall Street NE, Mpls www.elsies.com
-J.S.

BILLY ELLIOTT THE MUSICAL

October 9, 2012

Tensions between a rugged blue collar worker and his adolescent son who wants to—and has the talent to—become a first-rate ballet dancer fuel the energy of this winner of 10 Tonys. Composer Elton John was drawn to the story because of his own father's resistance to his music ambitions.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Like Billy, Heartland came from

humble beginnings and grew into something truly fabulous. The original space was cozy, but their new digs offer tons of space and expanded dining options. J'et   your way into the bar for a taste of their exquisite farm-to-table cuisine. Best of all, dinner doesn't have to be overly fancy—they've even got a burger! 289 East 5th St, St. Paul www.heartlandrestaurant.com
-J.S.

EMBERS

October 9, 2012

Christopher Hampton, the playwright the Guthrie celebrates this Fall, muses on the rupture of male friendship. Set in a Hungarian castle at the onset of World War II, a general finds out why his best friend of decades before mysteriously abandoned him while on a hunting trip. Joe Dowling directs.

Venue: Guthrie Theater's Dowling Studio
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Such serious discussion requires a room of quiet elegance, simple comfort and exquisite service who can virtually melt into the background, if the conversation

calls for it. Restaurant Alma has quietly slipping into the pantheon of classic, romantic restaurants and yet the food is always surprising and delightful. 528 University Ave, Mpls www.restaurantalma.com
-J.S.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

October 16, 2012

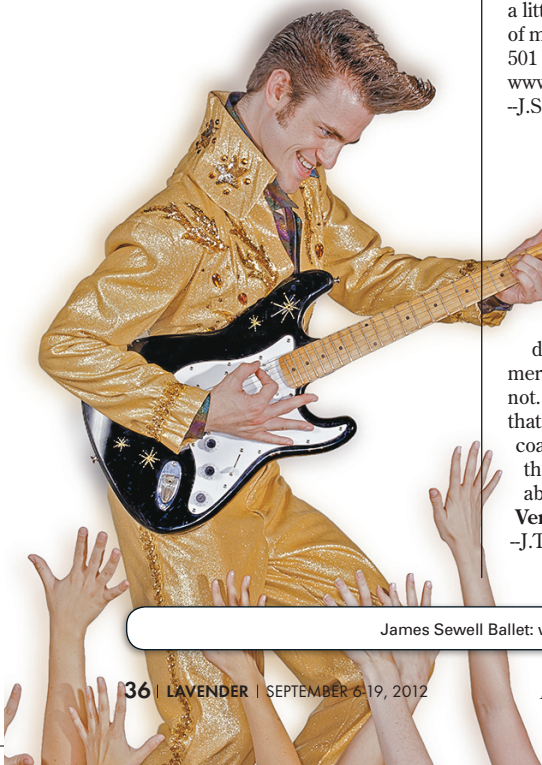
Hennepin Theatre Trust

This show shifted consciousness of 1990s Broadway. The idea of a Disney film musical transforming into a Broadway smash was not only out of the box but also out of a fairy tale. But the idea of true love surmounting startling physical differences was an idea whose time had finally come!

Venue: Orpheum Theatre
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Be their guest at the opulent La Belle Vie. Known for having the best of everything from service to food to bar program, dine at the James Beard Award-winning restaurant before the show. Dine in the Lounge and feel free to bring younger diners for a meal befitting a prince or princess. 510 Groveland Terrace, Mpls www.labellevie.us
-J.S.



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LOMBARDI

by Eric Simonson

October 6 - November 4, 2012

History Theatre kicks off its 35th anniversary season with the Minnesota premiere of *Lombardi*. Straight from Broadway, this engaging new play gives audiences insight into one of the game's greatest legends through the eyes of his players, his wife, and the media.

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HISTORY THEATRE'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }

THE PERUVIAN NIGHTINGALE

October 18, 2012

Ballet of the Dolls

Ballet of the Dolls re-tells the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale about the emperor's nightingale set in Peru with the voice of Yma Sumac as the Nightingale. Adorable Dolls veteran Stephanie Fellner stars. Choreographer Myron Johnson has an inspired gift for blending masterful dance technique with kinky sensual power.

Venue: Ritz Theatre

-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

No visit to Peru would be complete without a taste of cebiche. Check out the new Somos Peru for a taste of this seafood delight. 6009 Nicollet Ave, Mpls www.somosperu.com

-J.S.

KING LEAR

October 29, 2012

Raye Birk plays the ultimate role for a middle-aged or older male actor. Shakespeare captures the delusional aspect of an arrogant man who insists on being flattered rather than being levelled with. Two of his daughters cruelly indulge him. But the one who truly loves him does not.

Venue: Park Square Theatre

-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Dine like a king at King's Wine Bar with their mix on upscale comfort foods like a tasty burger, braised chicken or pot roast. 4555 Grand Ave S, Mpls www.kingsmpls.com

-J.S.



Company's Dieter Bierbrauer. Photo by Tom Sandelands



King Lear. Photo by Petronella Ystma

COMPANY

October 25, 2012

Theater Latté Da

It's a great paradox that heterosexual marriage's greatest proponent may well be the gay master of American musical theater, Stephen Sondheim. His intimate classic, *Company*, with book written by George Furth, captures the essence of what it means to devote your life and your self to another and the beautifully turbulent commitment that is.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Contemplate the state of marriage than with a naughty little wink and nod at the Strip Club. Nibble steaks with naughty named toppings and quaff a couple of the best cocktails to be found in

town, like Nameless Lover. 387 Maria Ave, St. Paul www.domeats.com

-J.S.

JAMES SEWELL BALLET: BALLET MACABRE

October 26, 2012

James Sewell Ballet

Minnesota's acclaimed and dreamy modernist ballet troupe imagines the work of Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). The legendary Romantic fiction writer is ideal for dance because of his nightmarish connection

with other dimensions. It was often rumored that he had turbulent gay romantic relations with Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville.

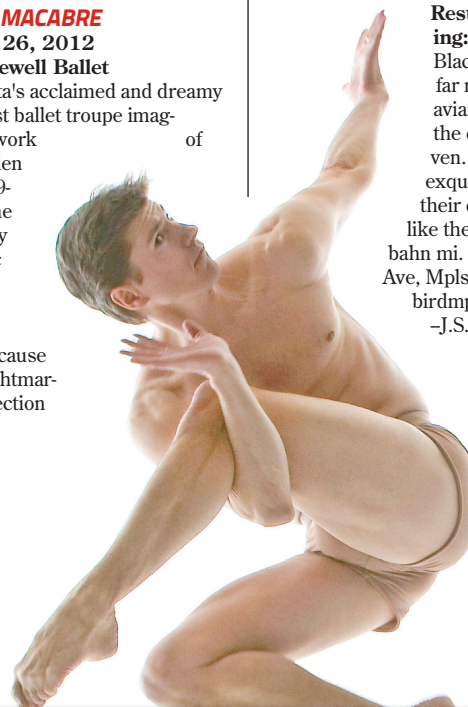
Venue: The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Blackbird isn't a far more friendly avian friend than the ominous raven. Dine on the exquisite fusion of their comfort food, like their fabulous bahn mi. 3800 Nicollet Ave, Mpls www.blackbirdmpls.com

-J.S.



James Sewell Ballet Dancer. Photo by Erik Saulitis

Mixed Blood Theatre: www.mixedblood.com • Minnesota Concert Opera: www.mnconcertopera.org



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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }



How The Grinch Stole Christmas. Photo by Dan Norman

IN THE NEXT ROOM November 2, 2012



Sarah Ruhl is one of the top young playwrights of her generation. She is known for her comic flair and daring observations. This Tony-nominated comedy is aka The Vibrator Play because it looks into the fear of female sexuality and the mystery of the female orgasm in Victorian times.

Venue: The Jungle Theater
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

The fabulous, tingling burn causes flushed faces and a craving for more. This eye-popping play calls for the addictive spice of Little Szechuan. Order the beef in spicy broth and discover a taste that will jolt those taste buds back to life. Sip a cocktail at the West End location. 5377 West 16th St, St. Louis Park www.littleszechuan.com
-J.S.

HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS November 6, 2012

The Christmas spirit just cannot countenance curmudgeons, even if they're as creatively unique as Dr. Seuss' cantankerous Grinch! But just how will the Whos from Whoville deal with the grump's foul moods? The Children's Theatre has become a sure hand at staging the classic books written by Theodor Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss).

Venue: Children's Theatre Company
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Take young guests to a fancy dinner at the Oak Grill on Macy's 12th floor for popovers and pot pie. Before leaving for the show, run through the basement or the yearly holiday show that ends in all kinds of sugary treats. 700 Nicollet Mall, Mpls www.macys.com
-J.S.



MU PERFORMING ARTS: MU DAIKO

November 8, 2012

Mu Performing Arts

Mu Performing Arts drumming ensemble exudes primal and powerful female energy. This Japanese drumming tradition starts out soft and slow and incrementally accelerates. Mu Performing Arts has established itself as the region's pre-eminent creator of performance by Asian-American artists with a heart and mind toward Asian cultural traditions.

Venue: The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

The Left Handed Cook combines Asian flavors with comforting foods. Try their take on the Canadian classic, poutine, topped with kimchee, or their unmissable fried chicken. 920 East Lake St, Mpls www.midtownglobalmarket.com
-J.S.



Mu Daiko. Photo by Michal Daniel

ANNA BOLENA

November 10, 2012

Minnesota Opera

By Mr. Bel Canto himself, Gaetano Donizetti, this trillerama concludes the Opera's Tudor trilogy with the story of the imprisoned English queen. Intrigue, betrayal, and gorgeous arias by an equally gorgeous soprano make this ultra-sumptuous production a must-see.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
-C.W.

Restaurant Pairing:

We all know where this is going and things are not going to end well for Anne. Before the show, celebrate her best known body part by partaking in a little head cheese from Corner Table's dazzling charcuterie plate. Their attentive service and killer wine pairings will make you feel like a king. 4257 Nicollet Ave, Mpls www.cornertablerestaurant.com
-J.S.

Minnesota Dance Theatre: www.mndance.org • Minnesota Opera: www.mnopera.org • Mu Performing Arts: www.muperformingarts.org •

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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

November 13, 2012

If you feel that Christmas season has lost the spirit of unconditional love and generosity that many Christians still hold as intrinsic to their faith, then be restored by this wonderful Guthrie staple. This year the brilliant Joe Chvala, who has choreographed past *Christmas Carols*, now directs the whole show!

Venue: Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Get into the yuletide spirit inside the cozy walls of Forepaugh's. Inside a beautiful, old neighborhood, graced with shimmering lights that reflect off each little snowflake, dine on roast chicken and take a moment to count all your blessings. 276 South Exchange St, St Paul www.forepaughs.com —J.S.

HOFESH SHECHTER COMPANY

November 13, 2012

Northrop Dance and Walker Art Center Present Hofesh Shechter Company

When a choreographer creates dance pieces with titles like "Uprising," "deGENERATION," and "Political Mother," you likely expect a forceful sensibility. And top critics in England, where Shechter's troupe is based, back that up passionately. A graduate of Jerusalem Academy for Dance and Music, Shechter has played London's major dance venues.

Venue: Orpheum Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Go way modern with stellar desserts at Cosmos. Their award-winning pastry chef spins desserts of dazzling tastes that have likely never been experienced before. They are stunning works of art. 601 N 1st Ave, Mpls

www.cosmosrestaurant.com

—J.S.

ZENON DANCE COMPANY'S FALL SEASON

November 16, 2012

Zenon Dance Company

When it comes to contemporary dance, our own Zenon Dance Company is among America's greatest. There's a luminosity and a transcendence that come through their inspired blend of jazz and modern dance. And figures of consequence like Susanna Tambutti, Danny Buraczeski, and Tamara Ober are part of the Zenon firmament.

Venue: The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

The food from the raw bar at Sea Change could be described using many of the same words, illustrative, illuminating, and transcendent. The langostine presentation is simply one of the best dishes in the cities, if not the entire Midwest. 806 S 2nd St. Mpls www.seachangempls.com —J.S.

I WISH YOU LOVE

November 18, 2012



I Wish You Love. Photo by Michal Daniels

Dennis Spears astounds as Nat King Cole as he struggles against systematized racism in the early age of television. The vocals are so creamily beautiful that you may be stunned at the ugly injustice done to the man singing them at the time he sings them. A powerful musical experience.

Venue: Penumbra Theatre

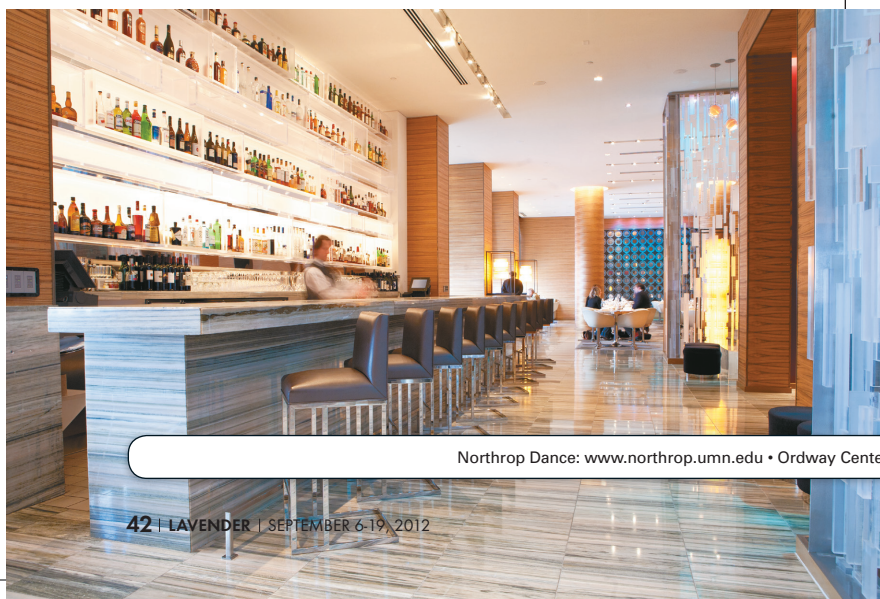
—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Enjoy the smooth, jazz, cool of the Imperial Room while sipping one of their fine martinis. A sentimental journey to the another era, thankfully free of some of the uglier parts of reality. 417 North 1st Ave, Mpls www.imperialroom.com —J.S.



Sea Change. Photo by Hubert Bonnet



Northrop Dance: www.northrop.umn.edu • Ordway Center for the Performing Arts: www.ordway.org •



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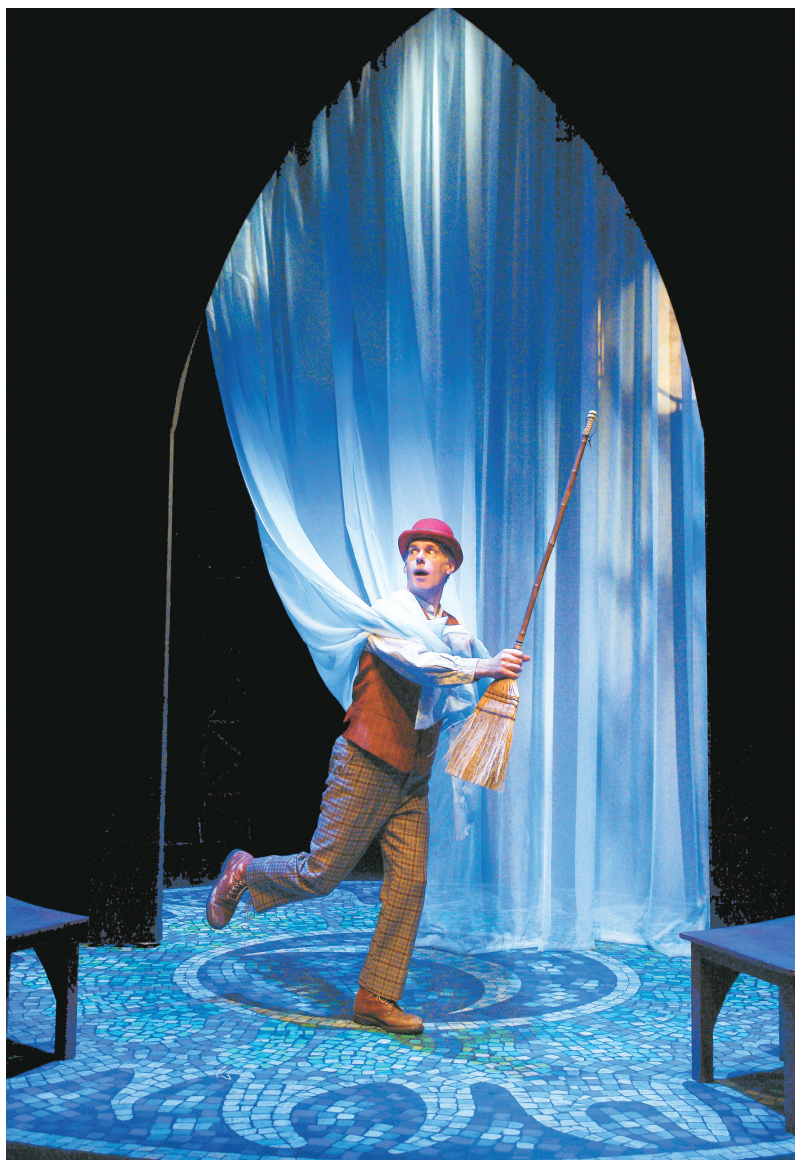
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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }



A Midsummer Night's Dream. Photos by Petronella Ystma

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

November 19, 2012

The most popular comedy of not only Shakespeare, but of all time, is a perennial favorite and a signature production for Park Square audiences. And what sets their interpretation apart from others is its ethereal sensuality. In 'The Dream' the bard has a mischievous sense of the laws of erotic attraction.

Venue: Park Square Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Tuck inside the playful room of the boho chic Loring Pasta Bar. Imps could likely be hiding anywhere. Lounge under the fairy lights dotting the decor and enjoy a bit of lip licking pasta before the show. 327 14th Ave SE, Mpls www.loringcafe.com

—J.S.

A DONT HUG ME CHRISTMAS CAROL

November 23, 2012

Hennepin Theatre Trust

Phil Olson's gigantic holiday hit spoofs our beloved Minnesota with tunes like "Gunner Fell Into An Ice Hole" and "Gramma Cut the Christmas Cheese." When a feisty Bunyan Bay bar owner snowmobiles on an icy lake, next thing he knows he's dreaming in a coma, guiltily haunted by ghosts!

Venue: New Century Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

For a Minnesota fine dining twist with a wink and a nod as a perfect pairing for this play, check out Haute Dish. Their take on tater tot hot dish is playful and rich. Look to their cocktail list for some of the best mixed in the cities with enough bourbon to get anyone through forced family fun time. 119 Washington Ave North, Mpls www.haute-dish.com

—J.S.

CHRISTMAS OF SWING

November 24, 2012

A nostalgic take on Minnesota's The Andrews Sisters, who entertained American troops during World War II. Their voices produced the definitive vocal sound of the 1940s USO shows. Other characters in this holiday treat: Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, the crackerjack comic duo Abbott & Costello, and of course, Santa Claus.

Venue: History Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Nestle into a steakhouse of a by-gone era at Jax Cafe in Nordeast. Sit in the stunning bar and order a Manhattan with a fine red meat dinner. It's a classic. 1928 University NE, Mpls www.jaxcafe.com/

—J.S.

SINDERELLA AT THE RITZ

November 30, 2012

Ballet of the Dolls

Ballet of the Dolls choreographer Myron Johnson is a Twin Cities legend known for his iconoclastic spirit and witty dance technique. This time he's especially controver-

sial in resetting the Cinderella story in a brothel where the stepmother 'rents out' her daughters. Johnson also says the show will have transgender characters.

Venue: Ritz Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Toast the manic, beautiful crazy at nearby Psycho Suzi's with some of their signature tiki drinks and fried food niblet bonanza. 1900 Marshall Ave NE, Mpls www.psychosuzis.com

THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

December 1, 2012

The Guthrie Theater presents this production by the Yale Repertory Theatre

Venetian Carlo Goldoni is Italy's most beloved historical comic playwright. The Venetian's 1740s madcap classic stars the extraordinary Steven Eppe fresh from a hit run at the distinguished Yale Repertory. Mistaken identities, broken engagements, and crossgender antics make for mischief. In the spirit of Theatre de la Jeune Lune.

Venue: Guthrie Theater's McGuire Proscenium Stage

—J.T.



The Servant of Two Masters. Photo by Richard Termine

Restaurant Pairing:

A convivial play calls for boisterous dining – pop in to the nearby Zen Box Izakaya where the staff happily calls out greetings as you walk in the door. It's a Japanese Cheers, they can't wait to know your name. Slurp up a bowlful of joy in their tasty ramen and the chicken Kara-Age. 602 Washington Ave S. Mpls www.zenboxizakaya.com

—J.S.



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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }



Catch Me If You Can. Photo courtesy of Hennepin TheatreTrust

ELF THE BROADWAY MUSICAL

December 5, 2012

When an orphan crawls into Santa's bag and ends up at the North Pole, he's so young and naive that he doesn't realize he's actually human. But St. Nick allows him to go to New York to find his birth father. An boy's exploration of identity.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Gimble's, the department store where Buddy creates his Christmas magic, sounds a lot like Macy's New York. Dine in department store splendor at Macy's River Room. Sip wild rice soup and nibble at those famous popovers under their beautiful chandeliers, set against the salmon walls - not unlike those of the Candycane Forest. 411 Cedar Street, St. Paul www.macys.com —J.S.

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

December 12, 2012

Hennepin Theatre Trust

Gay master playwright Terrence McNally wrote the libretto for the story of the beguiling Frank W. Abignale, Jr., who forged checks while he pretended to be a doctor, lawyer, and pilot. But the FBI is on his tail. Four 2011 Tony nominations including Best Musical. Spielberg directed the film version.

Venue: Orpheum Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Swing in to the Monte Carlo for that dashing style of a bygone era. Swank martinis are icy and they serve the best dry wings known to man. The room has hardly been touched by the hands of time. 219 3rd Ave North, Mpls www.montecarlo.mn.com —J.S.

LOYCE HOULTON'S NUT-CRACKER FANTASY

December 14, 2012

Minnesota Dance Theatre

The late Loyce Houlton founded the Minnesota Dance Theatre and her splendid version of the Russian Christmas classic is one of their signature pieces to this day. From a queer perspective, composer Tchaikovsky was gay, so consider what may percolate beneath the duet between the Sugarplum Fairy and her Cavalier!

Venue: The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Russian dining at Moscow on the

Hill is full of wonderful winter heartiness, pillowy piroshki, or savory pelmeni. A sweet White Russian for dessert and the stage is set for a magnificent evening. 371 Selby Ave., St. Paul www.moscowonthehill.com —J.S.

ALL IS CALM

December 19, 2012

Theater Latté Da

The World War I Christmas Truce of 1914 between troops of the Entente and Central Powers was a miraculous moment when soldiers at a battlefield on both sides bucked their superiors and shared in a spirit of reconciliation and brotherhood. Theater Latte Da has shaped this into a holiday tradition.

Venue: Pantages Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

All is right with the world when you're sipping a perfectly crafted cocktail. Bradstreet Crafthouse mixes drinks in a pre-Prohibition style with glittering ice cubes, perfect for imagining that holiday season when the world was quiet. 601 1st Avenue North Hennepin Ave, Mpls www.bradstreetcrafthouse.com —J.S.



Pillsbury House Theatre: www.pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org • Ballet of the Dolls: www.ritzdolls.com •

All is Calm. Photo Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London

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Priscilla Queen of The Desert. Photo by Joan Marcus

AIDA

January 3, 2013

Theater Latté Da

Elton John and Tim Rice's eclectic take on Verdi's opera was actually inspired by Leontyne Price's children's book version. This epic tale muses on conflicting loyalties between an Egyptian captain and the Nubian female beauty he captures. One asks what is more important: one's patriotic duty or following one's heart?

Venue: Pantages Theatre

-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Celebrate the soaring struggle for freedom with a flavor riot at Saffron. Take a gourmet tour of food of the world with octopus al la plancha, grilled haloumi and kefta tagine. Fuel the night with the sweet cardamom spiced Turkish coffee. 123 North 3rd Street, Mpls www.saffronmpls.com -J.S.

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT

January 8, 2013

Hennepin Theatre Trust

Get out your headdress girlfriend! Producer Bette Midler's stage musical version of the queer cult film celebrates how we celebrate ourselves when we defy gender norms. Stephan Elliot, who wrote and directed the 1994 drag/trans film smash, has co-written the musical with Allan Scott. Defiantly and divinely fabulous!

Venue: Orpheum Theatre

-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Grab your flower 'fro, best flip-flop dress and get ready to shake your groove thang. Prime yourself at the fabulous Rosa Mexicano bar with pink lights, the La Antiqua and a couple of tasty little tacos. 609 Hennepin Ave, Mpls www.rosamexicano.com -J.S.

LONG DAYS JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

January 12, 2013

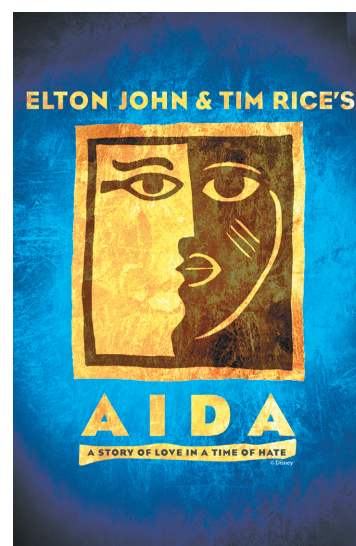
Eugene O'Neill's autobiographical milestone is called The Great American Play perhaps more frequently than any other. Guthrie icons Peter Michael Goetz and Helen Carey play the Tyrones. She's medically addicted to morphine. He thinks she simply lacks the will to 'just say no!' as Nancy Reagan might have put it.

Venue: Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage

-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Get ready for loud, family together-ness with a big meal at Rainbow Chinese. Reserve the table with the lazy Susan and learn to share their traditional Chinese food favorites. 2739 Nicollet Ave, Mpls www.rainbowchinese.com -J.S.



AIDA. Image courtesy of Theater Latté Da



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{ FALL ARTS & FOOD }

THE ULTIMATE PAJAMA PARTY

January 17, 2013

An engaging cast of zany characters, celebrities, sponsors, and get-your-girl-on party games and activities. Women come in their pajamas and enjoy a diva-licious appetizer and dessert bar, followed by an interactive show then a live dance party! An ultimate celebration of women moving on and moving forward for women with a passion for life!

Venue: The Lab

—J.T.

DOUBT

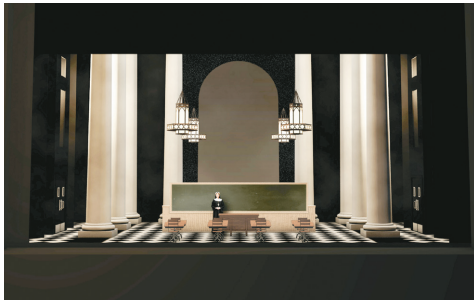
January 26, 2013

A Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative Production

Perhaps you know the premise, as told in the Pulitzer-winning play, produced by Ten Thousand Things and then Park Square, involving a morally-prickly nun's shocking accusation against a fellow cleric. This round, it's set to music by Douglas Cuomo and receives its world premiere in early 2013 with an all-star cast.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

—C.W.



Doubt. Photo by Set Designer Robert Brill

Restaurant Pairing:

Get in touch with your sweet, pious side by getting a pre-show treat at the new Angel Food Bakery. Their sweet confections and stiff coffee will satisfy every sweet tooth beyond a shadow of a doubt. 86 S 9th St, Mpls www.angelfoodmn.com —J.S.

NELLIE

January 26, 2013

Kim Hines was one of *Lavender's* Top Five Theater Artists of the



The Book of Mormon. Photo by Joan Marcus

1990s. Since then she has been produced across the nation including The Kennedy Center. Now she's back in the local spotlight with a play about one of Minnesota's greatest Labor leaders and Civil Rights pioneers, Nellie Stone Johnson.

Venue: History Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Express a little solidarity at Citizen Cafe in South Minneapolis. Try their Citizen Joe, their take on a sloppy Joe, because bringing people together is never a tidy affair. 2403 East 38th Street, Mpls www.thecitizencafe.com —J.S.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

February 5, 2013

Hennepin Theatre Trust

The South Park creators have actually crafted a Broadway smash that won nine Tony Awards. Goes to show you can create a great show about what seems like the unlikely of topics. But then hot guys in black dress slacks and plain white button down shirts exude that Mormon mystique!

Venue: Orpheum Theatre

—J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Celebrate your evening of perversion by beginning where you're likely going to end up: Hell. Hell's Kitchen is both cheeky and tasty. Try the sausage bread, nonsensi-

cal, but fabulous, just like the idea that the guys from South Park would win a slew of Tonys. 80 S

9th St, Mpls www.hellskitcheninc.com —J.S.



Zenon Dance Company: www.zenondance.org

Hell's Kitchen. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

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{ FALL
ARTS & FOOD }



Shear Madness. Photo by Chris Bennion

SHEAR MADNESS

February 27, 2013

Hennepin Theatre Trust

When the landlady of a hair salon is murdered, the audience gets to weigh in on who they think 'done it'. That means there can be a different ending for each performance. That's surely one crucial reason why *Shear Madness* has run for over a whopping 30 years in Boston.

Venue: Pantages Theatre

–J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Before you solve this “whack-y” murder, lick your chops at Butcher and the Boar. Jack Riebel’s darling has all the food lovers swooning over his meats. Share the smoked long rib or a little pickled heart Marcella. 1121 Hennepin Ave, Mpls www.butcherandtheboar.com

–J.S.



Hamlet. Photo by Karin Cooper for Washington National Opera

HAMLET

March 3, 2013

Minnesota Opera

Staying very close to Shakespeare’s classic story, here’s the rarely-heard operatic version by Ambrose Thomas (better known for saucy “Mignon”). This, the Frenchman’s second-most popular work, was roundly applauded in his lifetime. Now, lucky for us, the Opera

revives the seldom-staged drama with strong and looky singers.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
-C.W.

Restaurant Pairing:

Alas poor Yorick. I ate him, Horatio. Well, not really, but feel free to run lines on the skulls subtly decorating the delicious Victory 44. 2203 44th Ave N, Mpls www.victory-44.com
-J.S.

THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA

March 14, 2013

Theater Latté Da

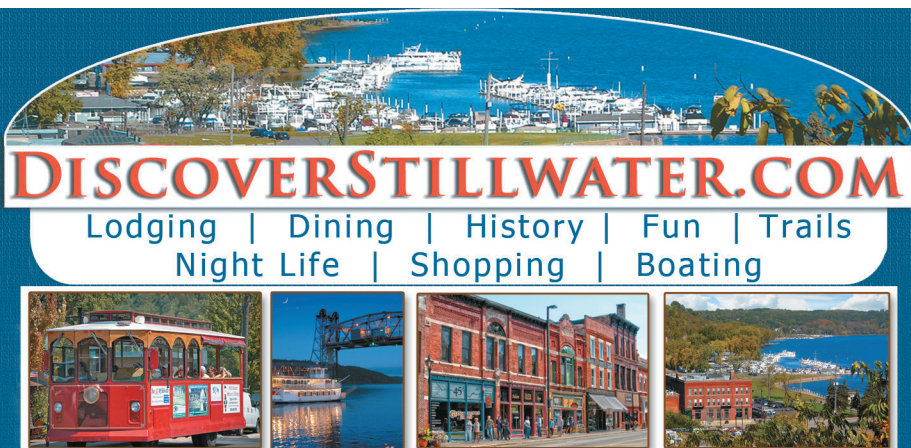
Craig Lucas's probing script and Adam Guettel's memorable music and lyrics presence us to what it is to come upon an expanded view of life. When a southern American mother's daughter falls in love with an Italian man, everyone is compelled to re-examine their hopes, values, and overview of life.

Venue: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
-J.T.

Restaurant Pairing:

Like love found under an Italian full moon, the Pazzaluna gnocchi will have you swooning. Sip a glass of wine and begin a night destined for romance. 360 St. Peter Street, St. Paul www.pazzaluna.com
-J.S.

The Light in the Piazza.
Photo courtesy of Theater Latté Da



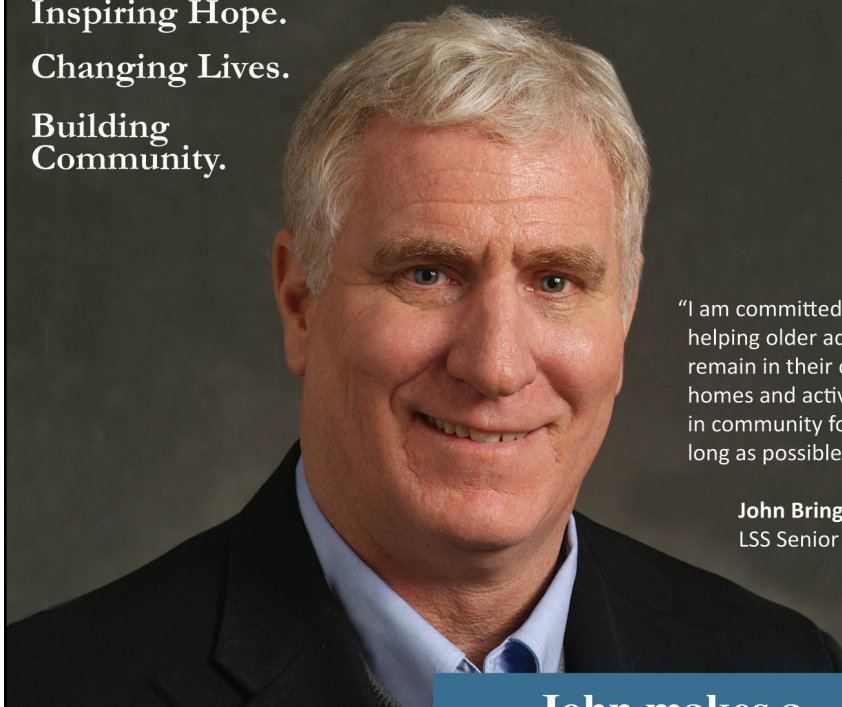
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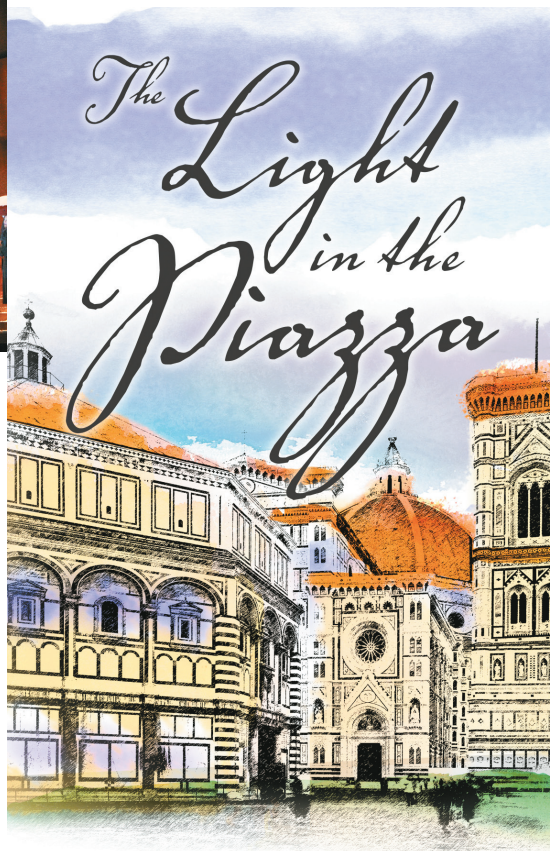
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Reenacting soldier at Fort Morgan. Photo by Carla Waldemar

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Lots of bird-watching here on the sunny shores of Alabama's Mobile Bay: herons, eagles, pelicans...and snowbirds. Year-round, waterfront hotels and rental condos invite us Yankees to slow our heart rates lounging on the powder sand, eyeing the Alpha gulls perform their self-important strut, dolphins arcing in the distance, sand crabs scuttling, and, if you're lucky, turtles hatching under the full moon.

Lots of ways to savor the water, starting with a lazy paddle in kayaks through the bayous of Wolf Bay, watching for the occasional manatee as eagles swoop above the pines and mullets leap from mirrored waters.

Join a sunset cruise on the bay, or head out in the morning with the skipper to reel in foot-long groupers. Or sign on as guest of the fishermen themselves as they haul in shrimp nets, hoist crab traps, and lean their long-handled pincers into the sand in a hunt for oysters.

Harvesting seafood is a great you-know-you're-not-in-Minnesota experience. Eating it is even better here, where—talk about fresh!—it practically leaps onto your plate. Shrimp! Oysters! Crab! Rinse and repeat. Next up: tuna, flounder, grouper—plus conch, gator and who-knows-what-all for the intrepid palate.

When we finally snag a table (the line stretches down the block) at a homey shack called King Neptune, we learn from longtime owner Al Sawyer the difference between what passes for shrimp Up North and the real deal. Two words: Red Royals. They're far sweeter than their puny kin—almost like lobster—and Al goes through thousands of pounds each week. Plus oysters, crab claws, seafood po' boys, slabs of tuna, pots of gumbo. It pays to heed your waitress's advice: "Save room for the key lahm pah, darlin'," she counsels. "It's homemade."

King Neptune swears by brown food—deep-fried the way God, or at least grandma, intended. But over at Gulf Shores Steamer, we encounter that slashed-circle sign desecrating the word "fried," for its owner prefers to honor the clean taste of the seafood itself, as proven by his grilled crab cakes topped with crawfish tails. Or the mountain of Red Royals. Or the blush-pink tuna steak. Not to mention shoals of raw oysters served up with just a squirt of lemon.

At The Compleat Angler, in Fairhope, a few miles from Orange Beach, where we've been eating, chef Zack also swears by brown, as in conch fritters, gator balls, fried crab claws. But also in the deep-Southern flavors of a vinegary gumbo and homemade pecan-orange-mango pie. Says Zack, "I'm one of ten kids, so I had to learn to hunt and cook or I'd go hungry. Now, I can't walk away from something I love so much. Everybody's happy when they're around food."

Here on the Gulf Shore, seafood is the great equalizer, as at Tacky Jack's. Or Floribama, straddling the state lines, where it's



(Clockwise from top left) Alabama's Gulf Shore; wait line at King Neptune; Al Sawyer, owner of King Neptune, shows off Red Royals. Photos by Carla Waldemar



even tackier. And then there's Voyageur, a romantic, white-tablecloth retreat aside the sea, serving shrimp and grits taken up a notch and delicate whole flounder. Not far away, Ginny Lane Grill, a trendy hangout with local art on the walls and evident in the kitchen, we dined on fried green tomatoes topped with shrimp; gumbo in another tasty variation of that culinary icon; and red beans with rice sided by spicy sausage and collard greens. Oh, and pah.

Lots of ways to walk off the guilt, starting with a stroll through Bellingrath Gardens—65 gorgeous acres that served as a fishing camp until the owner's wife got tired of making do. So, with the fortune his Coca Cola franchise provided, she planted azaleas, roses, camellias, lilies and hibiscus in glorious profusion along the river, then built a 15-room getaway (open to visitors), which she stuffed with enviable antiques, including Queen Victoria's desk, items once owned by

Sir Thomas Lipton, and a melodeon played by a Methodist circuit-riding preacher.

Take the 30-minute ferry ride to Dauphin Island's bird sanctuary to catch the spring and fall migrations and wintertime's Bright Warblers, "the Christmas tree ornaments of the woods," says birder Ron McKee. "This is their last fuel stop before the Gulf of Mexico. I'm an island resident, and the only reason is the birds. Never mind the hurricanes; they keep me here."

Robert Dixon's interest doesn't focus on the sky, it's on the water. He's a scientist at Sea Lab, where exhibits range from prehistoric ocean critters like the 30-foot mosasaur, which once inhabited Mobile Bay, to tanks teeming with alligators, snakes, lobsters, and all sorts of fish. Rob's eyes twinkle even brighter as he coaxes kids to pat the jellyfish and sand crabs in their open bins.

But the main attraction on the island is certainly Fort Gaines, famed for its role in the Bat-

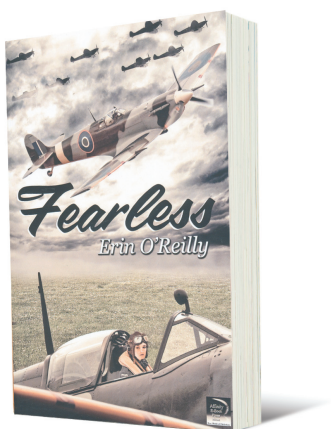
tle of Mobile Bay during the War Between the States. Five flags salute its former owners—first France, then England, then Spain, the U. S. in 1813, and the Confederates in 1861, says Park Ranger Joseph, sweating in his woolen re-enactment garb. We tour its working blacksmith shop, then hold our ears as Joseph gives a cannon demo that rattles the walls.

Over at nearby Fort Morgan, Mike Daley is also garbed in the heavy wool required all summer back in the day. The last big battle of the War of 1812 was waged here, when it became the troops' mission to safeguard New Orleans from the British, who planned to use Mobile Bay as a take-off point. It's also the site of one of the largest battles of the Civil War, when Admiral Farragut uttered his famous "Damn the torpedoes..." cry.

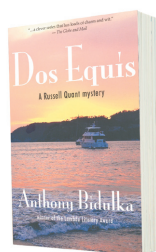
Here we're given a look at everyday fort life, including homes carved into the ramparts for women who did the soldiers' wash, and barracks holding sets of bunks, two to a bed (but eight to a single toothbrush, according to Mike). He fires the musket he's shouldering. Kids squeal.

A final swing to tiny Fairhope, through fields lush with cotton balls and peanut plants before we hit the cutest Main Street you'll ever hope to see. Fairhope was launched by a dreamer from Iowa who planned a Utopian community. Today it's flush instead with artists, whose galleries range from elegant to awful, and antiques stores acting as showrooms for museum-quality finds. We head to the pier for one last grand-slam sunset.

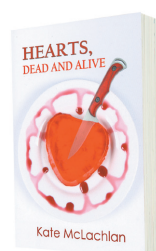
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**FEARLESS****Erin O'Reilly****Affinity****E-Book \$2.99; Paperback \$10**

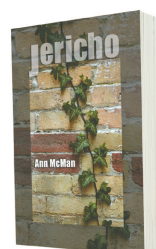
A feast for the eyes and the understanding, this large volume is replete with hundreds of photos, maps, and texts on a broad spectrum of the Mayan cultures by twenty-six specialists in their fields. Presenting much new information on the Mayan people, their language, and their works, chapters include essays on "Habitats and Early Horizons," "Architecture and Art," "Religious Beliefs," "The Colonial Era," and "The Maya in the Present," among others. The essays are concise, offering material rich in depth and detail, yet easily accessible to the reader. The Appendix contains a glossary, an overview of historical sites, selected museums worldwide together with their contact information, a timeline, charts of the ruling dynasties with accompanying hieroglyphs, and remarks on the writing and pronunciation of Mayan.

**DOS EQUIS****Anthony Bidulka****Insomniac Press - \$19.95**

Bidulka's eighth Russell Quant is as fresh and engaging as its predecessors. In the year since Quant parted from his near-perfect, nearly-betrothed Ethan, he's roamed the world to learn and grow. While lazing in Mexico, he receives an old rival's message: "Quant, you are the only one who can help me." But upon his return to Saskatchewan he finds Jane Cross's murdered corpse. Too late to help? Not for Quant. The trail leads to a cunning female serial killer whose undoing requires Quant to involve his whole family—including his indomitable Ukrainian mom, Kay, in a caper-con worthy of Jim Rockford's legendary Files. Danger, humor, creepiness, murder – a new love – Bidulka pulls out all the stops for another great Quant read. So *read*.

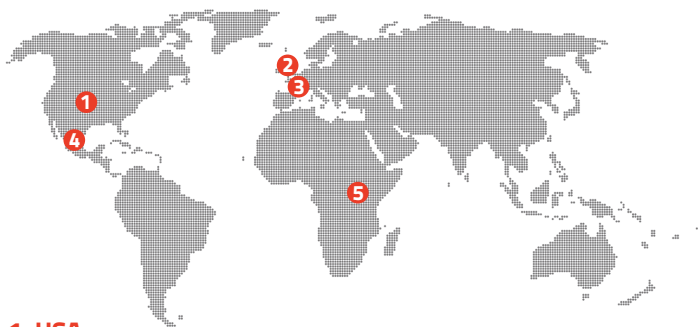
**HEARTS, DEAD AND ALIVE****Kate McLachlan****Regal Crest - \$15.95**

"Once you've smelled that pungent, sweetly putrid odor of rotting heart, you don't forget it," declares fifth grade teacher Kimberly Wayland, who knows whereof she speaks. A friend gave Kim her ring for safe-keeping during surgery. Kim slipped it onto her finger, then into a paper cup while making *papier-maché* in class. The cup was thrown out, hence Kim's Dumpster diving and her grisly find. Questions: Whose heart? Why didn't Kim call the cops? Well, Kim hides lots of things. From friends, the police—herself. Matters of hearts real and intangible inform this book, as does Kim's search for the severed heart's owner and his murderer. A gay child, a religious fanatic, family values and self-understanding join to build a highly readable, tautly plotted tale.

**JERICO****Ann McMan****Nuance - \$19.95**

Two young women with troubled pasts meet over a flat tire in southwestern Virginia. Syd Murphy, still married, is coming to create a Jericho Public library, while Maddie Stevenson, unmarried and a multi-credentialed physician, runs her late father's medical practice. Electricity flows between them as Maddie changes Syd's tire and they part ways, destined to meet again. McMan crafts a near antiromance as straight Syd and closeted Maddie become close friends, daring not speak to their names although gay friends Michael and David, owners of Jericho's Riverside Inn, clearly read their coded subtext. Meanwhile, Maddie's mother Celine, her father's long-held secret, Syd's delightful parents, a five-year-old, and a menacing psychopath keep the plot energized as the reader roots for those fabled walls to tumble down. □

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1-USA

Three Transgender Women Flee Mexico To Escape Transphobia in "Crossing Over"

On Top reports that the documentary *Crossing Over* looks at the lives of three transgender Mexican women as they seek political asylum in the United States to escape transphobia in their homeland. Francis Murillo, Brenda Gonzalez and Abigail Madariaga fled Mexico and are now living in Los Angeles to escape the stigma, discrimination, and persecution associated with being transgender in the highly Catholic nation. The documentary is the first for director Isabel Castro, a Mexican immigrant who recently graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She said she expects to finish the film in January and premiere it on next year's festival circuit.

NBC's Salt Lake City Affiliate Won't Air Gay-Themed Comedy "The New Normal"

NBC's *Salt Lake City Animate With A Gay-Themed Comedy* The new normal

ABC News reports that for the second year in a row, NBC's affiliate in Salt Lake City, Utah, has opted not to air one of the network's new series, a comedy about a surrogate mother who moves in with a gay couple to help them have a child. Speaking with Deseret News, the CEO of KSL's parent company cited what he deemed to be crude language and explicit content as the reason for the decision. He said, "For our brand, this program simply feels inappropriate on several dimensions, especially during family viewing time." The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation has also called attention to the ban. The president of GLAAD is quoted in the article as saying, "While audiences, critics and advertisers have all supported LGBT stories, KSL is demonstrating how deeply out of touch it is with the rest of the country."

49ers Become First NFL Team To Record Anti-Gay Bullying Video

The Sacramento Bee reports that the 49ers followed the baseball Giants by becoming the first team in their league to record an "It Gets Better" video condemning anti-gay violence and bullying. The minute-long segment features defenders Donte Whitner, Ahmad Brooks, Isaac Sopoaga and Ricky Jean Francois. The video, which was filmed in the spring, came about after fan Sean Chapin gathered more than 16,000 signatures on Change.org that encouraged the 49ers to become the first NFL team to make one. A team spokesman said the anti-bullying message fits the mission of the 49ers Foundation, which is to "Keep kids safe, on track, and in school."

T-Mobile Endorses Gay Marriage In Washington State

On Top Magazine reports that T-Mobile USA on Monday announced it would back Referendum 74, the Washington state ballot measure which if approved would uphold a gay marriage law enacted by lawmakers. According to the Bellevue Patch, T-Mobile will donate \$25,000 to Washington United for Marriage, the campaign to approve Referendum 74 in November. Jim Alling, interim CEO of T-Mobile, said in a statement: "T-Mobile has a long-standing focus on creating an inclusive workplace environment for our employees." "Our support of this issue is a reflection of our culture, how we do business, and our belief in the fair and equitable treatment of all employees."



2-ENGLAND

Manchester LGBT Pride Parade Draws Thousands

San Diego LGBT Weekly reports that thousands lined the streets of Manchester's city center to watch one of the U.K.'s largest LGBT Pride parades, this past weekend. Locals and visitors alike defied the forecasted rain to turn out in the thousands to support this year's Manchester Pride parade, featuring more than 100 participating companies, individuals, sponsors, and local lifestyle, political, and professional organizations. Many of the entrants were inspired by this year's theme of *Queer'd Science* and the centenary of the birth of Alan Turing, the mathematician and founding father of modern cognitive science who was persecuted for his homosexuality.

3-FRANCE

France's Gay Marriage Bill To Be Introduced In October

The Huffington Post reports that if all goes according to plan, France could become the ninth European country to legalize gay marriage by 2013. French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayraud confirmed in an address to Socialist Party members Saturday that lawmakers plan to introduce national legislation in October that would allow same-sex couples to tie the knot. Not only do numerous polls indicate that French citizens support gay marriage, but President Francois Hollande declared his support for both marriage equality and adoption rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) couples during his campaign, as reported by *Le Monde*.

4-MEXICO

Mexican States Ordered To Honor Gay Marriages

The New York Times reports that the Mexican Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that each of the country's 31 states must recognize same-sex marriages registered in Mexico City, potentially giving gay and lesbian couples full matrimonial rights nationwide. On Tuesday, the court went a step further, ruling 9 to 2 against a complaint from the attorney general's office, which had said that other jurisdictions should not be required to honor marriages that were performed in Mexico City.

While the court made it clear that state governments were not obligated to enact same-sex marriage laws of their own, it did require them to recognize the legality of such marriages performed in Mexico City.

5-UGANDA

Play About Gay Man Staged In Conservative Uganda

WHEC.com reports that a play that revolves around the turbulent life of a gay man in Uganda is being staged in the East African nation, where three years ago a parliamentarian wrote a bill seeking the death penalty for homosexuals. This is the first time a play exploring homosexuality is being performed in Uganda, and the British playwright and producers say they hope their work can help "normalize the gay character" in this conservative country. The play, titled "The River and the Mountain," premiered last Friday at a little-known theater in the capital, Kampala, amid fears the police would raid the venue and stop production. Government officials had objected to the play and blocked it from being staged at Uganda's national theater.

Interview with Emerson Hunton, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Can you share with us a little about your family and your current transition to college?

I grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I have two loving and caring Moms who have been great parents. I really couldn't ask for a better childhood. They have always been there to support and motivate me especially now as I have moved away from home to start college.

This month I will be starting my first year of college at Oberlin College and Conservatory, in Ohio. I will be studying Jazz Percussion, because I am passionate about music.

What activities were you involved in during your high school years?

I spent a lot of time playing music at school, as well as with quite a few groups outside of school. I was a member of the Varsity swim team for all four years, and a captain my senior year. I also enjoyed other leadership roles, and participated in student council and Minneapolis Youth Congress.

What are a few of your favorite family memories?

Some of my fondest memories of my childhood are traveling with my parents and grandparents, I was very lucky. Seeing the world helped develop me as a person, and strengthened my family ties.

How has the proposed marriage amendment impacted your family?

The amendment would make it impossible for my parents to get married in the future, something that they have been hoping to do some day. They have been together for twenty-seven years, and it would be wonderful to finally have that relationship be legally recognized. Hearing people say that allowing same-sex marriage would destabilize or jeopardize the sanctity of marriage is demoralizing, and couldn't be further from the truth.

What important life lessons have you learned from your family?

As I grew up I learned about the golden rule that so many other Minnesotans have learned about from their families, faith traditions, and communities. To me the simple vision of treating others as you would want to be treated makes for more peaceful caring communities. This is one of the many reasons why I think all Minnesotans should vote NO in November! No one should be told it is illegal to marry the person they love.

Why will you be Voting NO in November?

It's time to stand behind what we say, and vote no. I am voting no because I am against the oppression of fellow human beings. I am voting no because it's the right thing to do.

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My Hero Drug Dealer

LAST MONTH, for the first time in my life, I called a drug dealer. I got his name through a neighborhood kid. Now before you go making nasty assumptions about me using an innocent kid to score drugs, let me fill you in on the backstory. My mother was diagnosed with advanced cancer about a month ago. When this type of thing happens you feel completely powerless and make every effort to take control away from that bastard cancer. I read that marijuana is a miracle drug in treating chemo symptoms. So, while I can't cure cancer, I can get my mom stoned. I immediately started looking for a dealer.

I've never been into drugs. I smoked pot a few times in college, but all it did was make me want to eat pudding pops and watch reality TV. I never went out of my way to find pot. It was always offered to me. So, I had no idea how to find a dealer.

At first, I didn't need one. My handyman had a connection, who sold me a batch of pot brownies. My mom ate two and got stoned out of her gourd. She called me the next day and exclaimed, "I think I had what they call a 'trip.' It wasn't unpleasant. And I was filled with a sense of well-being."

I asked my handyman for another batch, but he reported that his dealer had gone on vacation.

"Drug dealers go on vacation?" I asked. Who knew?

So, I approached a neighborhood teenager, thinking he'd set me up with whatever sleezeball sells drugs in the woods near the high school. But, instead, he responded, "Sure, my dad can take care of you." His dad? Apparently, drug dealer has turned into an acceptable middle-class profession.

His dad owns a farm and marijuana is one of his more profitable crops. I called him and stumbled through a voicemail. "My mom has cancer and I understand you might have some.....ummm...medicine to help her. Oh, and I'm not a cop. I promise."

While waiting for a return phone call, my girlfriend, Wendy, and I spotted a bill-

board for a head shop. "I bet we can find drugs there!" I exclaimed. What we found were a lowlife with suspicious stains on his t-shirt and his pregnant, slack-jawed girlfriend whining that she needed a snack. He tossed her a bag of cheese doodles and eagerly volunteered to deliver the weed to my house. I gave him my phone number to schedule a delivery time.

"Are you insane?" Wendy said as soon as we got into the car. "You just invited a drug dealer and his malnourished, bi-polar girlfriend to our house." For the next several days, he called incessantly. We would stare at the phone in terror each time it rang, expecting the dealer to hop through the receiver and cut our throats. I never returned the calls.

Eventually, the kid's drug-farming dad called back, and left the following cryptic message, "Does your mother have peanut allergies? If not, stop by tonight."

Wendy and I looked at each other in alarm. "Do you think peanut allergies is code for something?" I asked. "If you don't answer it correctly, he'll think you're a narc and he'll cut your throat!" she warned.

So I showed up at his house fairly certain that I would be killed. Instead, he presented me with a gift bag packed with pot-filled peanut butter cookies. "I put M&Ms on some of them," he said, proudly pointing at cookies that had been mangled by jamming M&Ms into the dough with his beefy fingers. I was stunned by his sweetness and even more surprised when he would not accept money. "No charge for cancer patients," he said. "It's my way of giving back to the community."

This touched off a flood of emotion that had been building since my mother was diagnosed. I buried my face in my drug dealer's chest and convulsed with sobs, while he stroked my hair. "She'll be OK," he whispered.

No, she won't. But thanks to him, she will be stoned, and for a few hours a day, life won't be unpleasant. □

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Dear Ms. Behavior:

I am an open-minded and enlightened straight person, but I can't help noticing that the stereotype about lesbians having defined roles is true. I work for a social services agency where most of the employees are lesbians. We've been socializing on weekends, and it's become clear to me that my new friends have the same roles as my husband and I do. I guess someone has to be the hunter/gatherer/lifter of heavy objects! But if that's true, why not just accept it? Also, one member of each couple is always the weenie, just like my husband is. The weenie is the person who stands outside 7-11 at midnight, on the pay phone in the rain saying something like "They don't have the pecan danish ring, so what do you want instead?" because a) it's ALWAYS the man's job to make these late-night trips and b) we say, "Oh. You got THAT?" if they make a decision on their own.

Will you be brave and admit that it's true, Ms. Behavior?

—STRAIGHT SUSAN

Dear Straight Susan:

Yes, it's true, dykes often have roles. The only lesbians who would deny it are the ones who dress in matching natural-fiber clothes or athletic wear, in attempt to appear neither too masculine nor too feminine and entirely equal.

Ms. Behavior recently attended a wedding where most of the guests were lesbians. Every couple was comprised of one woman in a man-tailored suit and black boots and another in makeup and feminine attire (with the exception of one unfortunate pair of dykes who wore the exact same floral spinsterish dresses and shoes, like a couple of old aunties).

Your letter has inspired an old and dormant craving for pecan danish ring. Perhaps Ms. Behavior will wait until dark, then ring her little bell and send her weenie out to fetch one.

Dear Ms. Behavior:

What should I do when an acquaintance greets me exuberantly with a big wet kiss on the mouth, and then tells me that they have a terrible cold?

That happened to me recently, and I'm still annoyed. I don't know if I'm just suggestible, but I came down with a wretched two-week virus.

—PISSED

Dear Pissed:

Ms. Behavior believes that a certain group of activities (including mouth kissing, nipple sucking, and penetration) should be reserved for people toward whom one intends to express sexual interest.

This is not to that you should necessarily sleep with just one person. Take on the whole football team if you want, but it is silly to increase your risk of cold and flu beyond the number of tongues you'd welcome into your mouth for reasons of pleasure.

It's your responsibility to protect your own health. So, when a non-lover (or non-prospect) approaches your mouth with succulent lips, he or she should not be offended if you turn the other cheek.

There are indeed individuals who are difficult to discourage. They follow your lips as if with sonar, even if you bob your head frantically to avoid them. To such people one can only be direct. Start with something gentle like, "Don't kiss me on the mouth. If you give

me a cold I'll rip your head off."

Dear Ms. Behavior:

I am about to turn 20 and most of my friends are much older. One of my friends has a lot of antique gay memorabilia, and I would like to know what some of it means, but I don't want to admit that I have no idea. So...what's the deal with all the triangles? Does it mean anything that some point up and some point down? And why do so many photos from long long ago feature rainbows?

— NED

Dear Ned:

Pink triangles were used by Nazis to identify and persecute queers, in much the same way yellow stars were used for Jews. Eventually, someone reclaimed the pink triangle as a symbol of queer pride.

As for the dreaded rainbows, some silly nellie had a Judy Garland hallucination while in a "K-Hole" in the early 90s and created vibrantly colored necklaces and clothing. A variety of opportunistic marketing geniuses were struck with a collective unconscious vision and pumped out trillions of rainbow necklaces, flags, candles, and sarongs before you could say "poofier." Soon celebratory homosexuals everywhere mass-produced these schlocky items.

So far as analyzing which way the triangle points, you have too much free time. Get a hobby; and ignore the little voices that seem to be coming from your silver fillings. Be forewarned that unwitting heterosexuals have often purchased rainbow decals thinking that they're pretty and applied them to the windows of their Volvo Wagons. Do not assume this means they want to sleep with you. □

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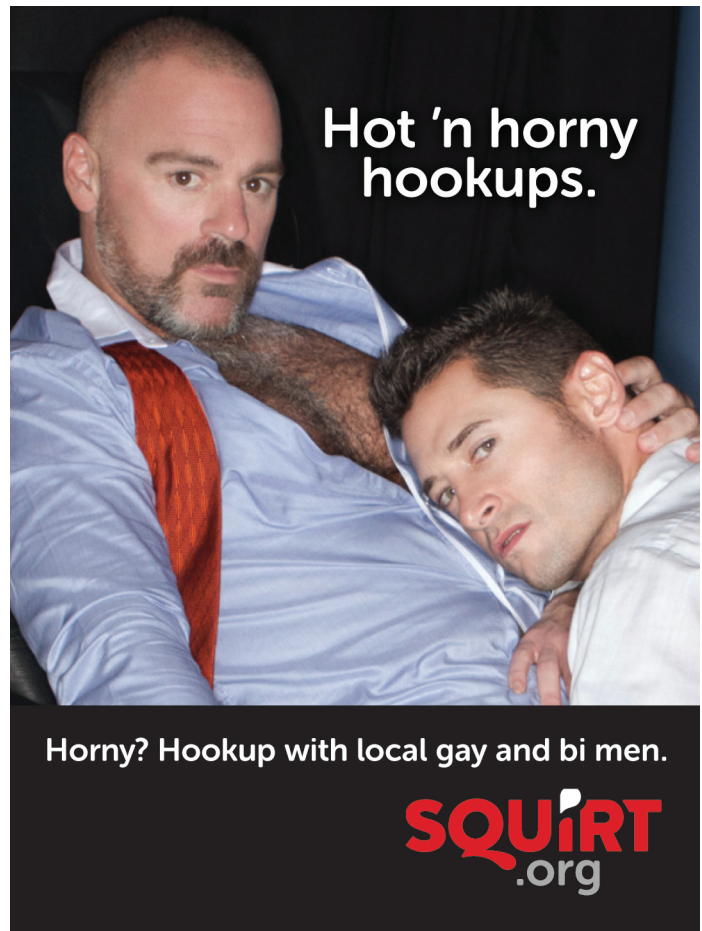
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ADVERTISER INDEX

Adult		Gifts		Mortgage	
Manhunt.....14		Fantasy Gifts.....21		Gleason, Pat.....21	
Megaphone.....65		Grocery Stores		Organizations	
Squirt.....65		Wedge Co-op.....33		Lutheran Social Services of	
Arts & Entertainment		Health & Wellness		Minnesota.....53	
Chanbassen Dinner Theater.....33		Blue Cross Blue Shield.....45		Metropolitan Center for Independent	
History Theatre, The.....37		North Suburban Eye Specialists.....11		Living.....7	
James Sewell Baller.....52		Medica.....43		Network59-61	
Jungle Theater.....31		Right at Home.....45		Pet Products & Services	
Northrop Auditorium.....33		Steele Fitness.....3		Animal Humane Society 45	
Olivia Newton John.....29		University of Minnesota, Infectious		Metro Dogs Daycare & Boarding 51	
Automotive		Diseases.....41		Real Estate & Rentals	
Fiat Minneapolis.....27		YWCA of Minneapolis.....21		Chazin Group, Inc. 49	
LaMettry's Collision.....6		Health, Wellness & Recovery		Eichaker, Dean 51	
One Simple Plan / MN RV.....67		Dr. Paul Amble DDS.....49		Hendlin 39	
St. Paul & Wild Prairie		Latitudes.....49		Restaurants	
Harley-Davidson.....51		Home Furnishings & Accessories		Bar Louie Uptown.....20	
Bars & Nightlife		Designer Marketplace.....49		Blackbird Cafe.....33	
19 Bar.....15		Home Services		Burger Moe's.....29	
Camp Bar.....19		Re-Bath.....45		Cecil's Deli.....25	
Gay 90's.....19		Sedgwick Heating and Air.....21		Citizen Cafe.....33	
Lush Food Bar.....15		Standard Heating & Air		Downtown Woodfire Grill.....25	
Town House.....16		Conditioning.....9		French Meadow Bakery & Cafe.....28	
Beauty & Relaxation		Sito Roofing and Construction.....5		Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta.....47	
Anew Aesthetic Medical Center.....17		Total Comfort.....31		Loring Kitchen & Bar.....29	
Dermatology Consultants.....13		Uptown Plumbing, Heating &		Nokomis Cafe.....37	
Beverages		Cooling.....2		Nonna Rosa's.....37	
Diageo.....68		Yujovich Design Build.....47		Sawatdee Thai.....33	
Sorella Wine & Spirits.....25		Insurance		Toast Wine Bar & Cafe.....25	
Catering		Bartell, Dawn.....7		Tum Rup Thai.....47	
D'Amico & Partners.....43		Wolfson, Steve.....49		Grandview Grill.....28	
Education		Jewelry		Louisiana Cafe.....28	
Mounds Park Academy.....31		Max's.....7		Uptown Diner.....28	
Events		T Lee Fine Designer Jewelry.....39		Woodbury Cafe.....28	
Red Frog Events.....39		Cloutier Law Offices.....19		Wild Roast Cafe.....25	
Financial		Dean, Jeff.....5		Sports & Recreation	
Mallatji, Roy.....17		Heltzer & Houghtaling.....9		Above the Falls Sports.....7	
Palm, Karen.....7		Jerry Burg, Attorney at Law.....10		Travel & Accommodations	
US Bank.....9		Moshier, Becky.....7		Stillwater/Oak Park Heights Convention	
Wells Fargo Bank.....5		Media & Communications		& Visitors Bureau.....53	
Floral & Garden		Radio K 770.....51		Zoo	
Tangletown Gardens.....6		AM950.....10		Minnesota Zoo.....22, 23	
Food		Mortgage			
Golden Fig Fine Foods.....37		David Lozinski, First Equity			
Vinaigrette.....47					



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The Thing That Made You

I remember looking down the length of the porch.

THIS IS a picture of me sitting on the swing on Mama's porch. I'm five or six years old here. Those are azalea bushes in the yard behind me, and that's the house belonging to the neighbor who Mama calls "trash." There are a couple rocking chairs in the foreground—one for Deda, my grandpa. And one for Mama.

Part of the front of the house is visible—it's a powder blue with white window shutters. I think my uncle helped paint it this color. The house was gray before. There, on the right side of the picture, that's the kinda-new balustrade. White to match the window shutters. And there are some more azalea bushes. And part of the front yard. You can't see it in this picture, but if you turned right from this viewpoint, you'd see a great big pine tree.

"I'm gonna chop that tree down, Mama," I used to say. And she'd let me take a butter knife outside so I could try. I made a little progress every time I visited—until someone told me one day that the tree could feel the knife. That it hurt when I cut into it. So I stopped.

So anyway, there I am, sitting in my favorite place in the whole wide world, my swing, a little pudgy for my age, smiling my awful, too-forced goblin smile.

Here is where I sat with Mama and Deda to smell the rain and watch thunderstorms.

Mama taught me how to play gin rummy here over sweet tea and watermelon (she'd pick out the seeds for me). This swing was my space ship when I played astronaut. It was my Rolls Royce when I pretended I was rich. I'd sit out here on Sunday afternoons, smelling my grandmother cooking Sunday dinner, listening to Deda tell stories and rhymes to anyone who'd listen. I'd close my eyes to his voice, and I'd float away with his words.

I sat here in a black suit after my grandfather died, quiet with the rest of the family while we waited for the limousines to take us to his funeral. And I sat here again after my mom died. My family was here, remembering those we lost, and appreciating those we still had around.

"When Jerry was your age, he used to tell me he was going to build me a ten-story house one day," my grandmother said to me of my cousin, "And Timmy told me he'd give me a thousand dollars when he got rich," of my brother. "I don't need the house, but I'll take the thousand," she joked. It was a story she'd tell a million times over, and we'd all listen as if we'd never heard it—not because we were being polite, but because we wanted to hear it. She'd brighten us up, even on the morning of her daughter's funeral, because that's who she was: a southern magnolia

firecracker of a woman who put family first, herself second. My memories with her are tied to this swing.

The last time I ever sat here, on my swing, was in the autumn of my sophomore year. Mama was dead, and I was there to say goodbye.

I remember looking down the length of the porch from my swing that final night—at Mama and Deda's rocking chairs, at the azalea bushes, at the pine tree that still bore the scars of my lumberjacking. It was now so empty, so void of life. Eerily quiet.

I pushed off the ground to swing, and I closed my eyes. I pictured Mama and Deda with my mom, gossiping and playing cards. I imagined the smell of rain and the sound of thunder. I felt Mama's arms around me, consoling me after my mom's death. And for just the briefest moment, I was six years old again, smiling into a camera from my space ship. Swinging as high as I could go. With no end in sight.

When I opened my eyes, the porch was still empty. There would be no more memories here. This here, in this picture, this wooden swing hanging from Mama and Deda's porch—this is the thing that made me.

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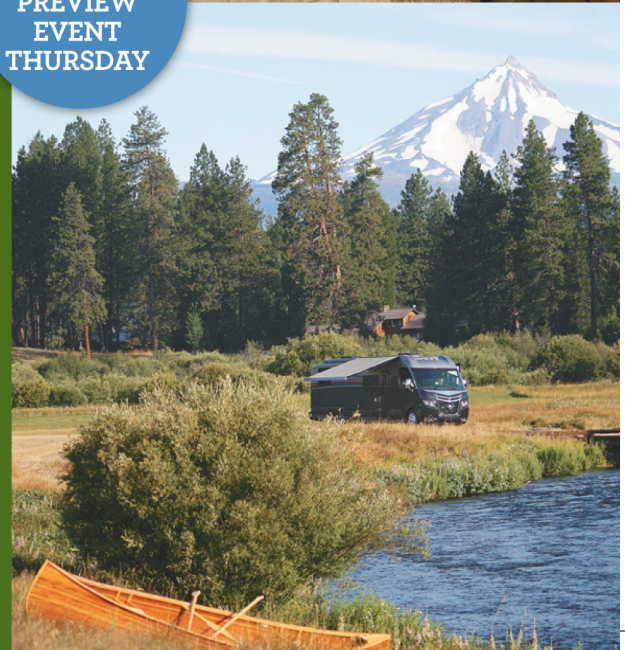
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